

The Living Word

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

25 June 2023

First Reading Jer 20:10-13

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah

He has delivered the soul of the needy from the hands of those who are evil.

Jeremiah said:

'I hear so many disparaging me,
"Terror from every side!
Denounce him! Let us denounce him!"
All those who used to be my friends
watched for my downfall,
"Perhaps he will be seduced into error.
Then we will master him
and take our revenge!"
But the Lord is at my side,
a mighty hero;
my opponents will stumble, mastered,
confounded by their failure;
everlasting, unforgettable disgrace
will be theirs.
But you, Lord of Hosts, you who probe
with justice,
who scrutinise the loins and heart,
let me see the vengeance you will take
on them,
for I have committed my cause to you.
Sing to the Lord,
praise the Lord,
for he has delivered the soul
of the needy
from the hands of evil men.'

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 68:8-10. 14. 17. 33-35. R. v.14

**(R.) Lord, in your great love,
answer me.**

1. It is for you that I suffer taunts,
that shame covers my face,
that I have become a stranger to my
brothers,
an alien to my own mother's sons.
I burn with zeal for your house
and taunts against you fall on me.
(R.)
2. This is my prayer to you,
my prayer for your favour.
In your great love, answer me, O God,
with your help that never fails:
Lord, answer, for your love is kind;
in your compassion, turn towards me.
(R.)
3. The poor when they see it will be glad
and God-seeking hearts will revive;
for the Lord listens to the needy
and does not spurn his servants in
their chains.
Let the heavens and the earth give
him praise,
the sea and all its living creatures.
(R.)

Second Reading Rom 5:12-15

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

God's gift to us is nothing like our sin against him.

Sin entered the world through one man,
and through sin death, and thus death
has spread through the whole human race
because everyone has sinned. Sin existed
in the world long before the Law was given.
There was no law and so no one could be
accused of the sin of 'law-breaking', yet
death reigned over all from Adam to Moses,
even though their sin, unlike that of Adam,
was not a matter of breaking a law.

Adam prefigured the One to come, but
the gift itself considerably outweighed the
fall. If it is certain that through one man's
fall so many died, it is even more certain
that divine grace, coming through the one
man, Jesus Christ, came to so many as an
abundant free gift.

Gospel Acclamation Jn 15:26. 27

Alleluia, alleluia!

**The Spirit of Truth will bear witness
to me, says the Lord,
and you also will be my witnesses.
Alleluia!**

Gospel Mt 10:26-33

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

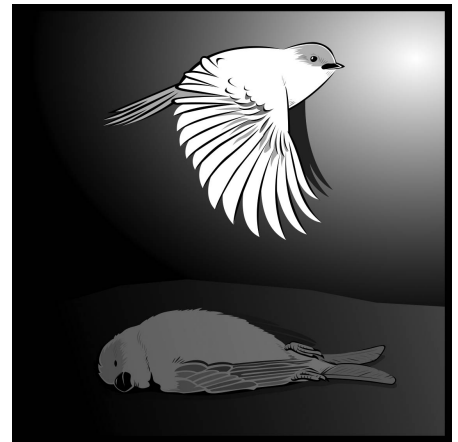
Do not fear those who can kill the body.

Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows:
'Do not be afraid. For everything that is now
covered will be uncovered, and everything
now hidden will be made clear. What I say to
you in the dark, tell in the daylight;
what you hear in whispers, proclaim from
the house-tops.

'Do not be afraid of those who kill the body
but cannot kill the soul; fear him rather
who can destroy both body and soul in hell.
Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny?
And yet not one falls to the ground without
your Father knowing. Why, every hair on
your head has been counted. So there is no
need to be afraid; you are worth more than
hundreds of sparrows.

'So if anyone declares himself for me in
the presence of men, I will declare myself
for him in the presence of my Father in
heaven. But the one who disowns me in
the presence of men, I will disown in the
presence of my Father in heaven.'

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Reflection by Fr Michael Tate

Our Gospel reads: '... not one [sparrow] falls to the ground without your Father knowing.'

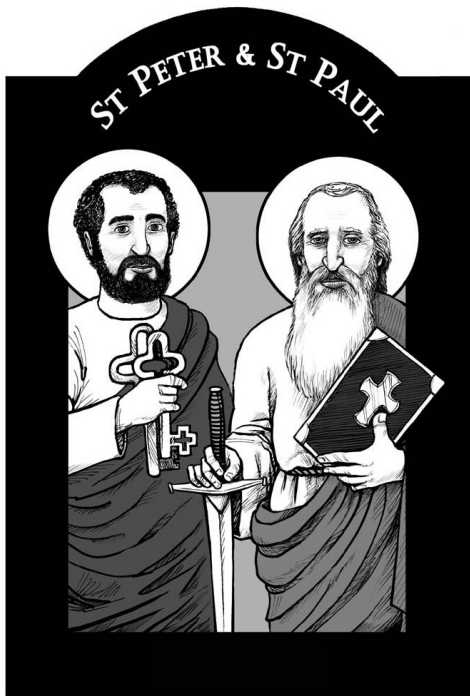
But that is a bad translation. The Greek simply says 'not one [sparrow] will fall to the ground without your Father.' Full stop! Our Heavenly Father accompanies a dying sparrow as it dies! That is the measure of the Creator's love for all creatures. God wants to – does – enter into the moment of death, *our* moment of death.

Now, that *would* be consoling if I were facing what Jesus was foreseeing for his disciples in the first century.

One of the first Christian groups to hear this Gospel was that set around the Tigris River running through Baghdad in modern day Iraq. Now they face terrible persecution from fanatical Muslims. We can barely imagine hearing today's Gospel amongst the remnant, left in Baghdad today. How does 'Do not be afraid' really sound to them?

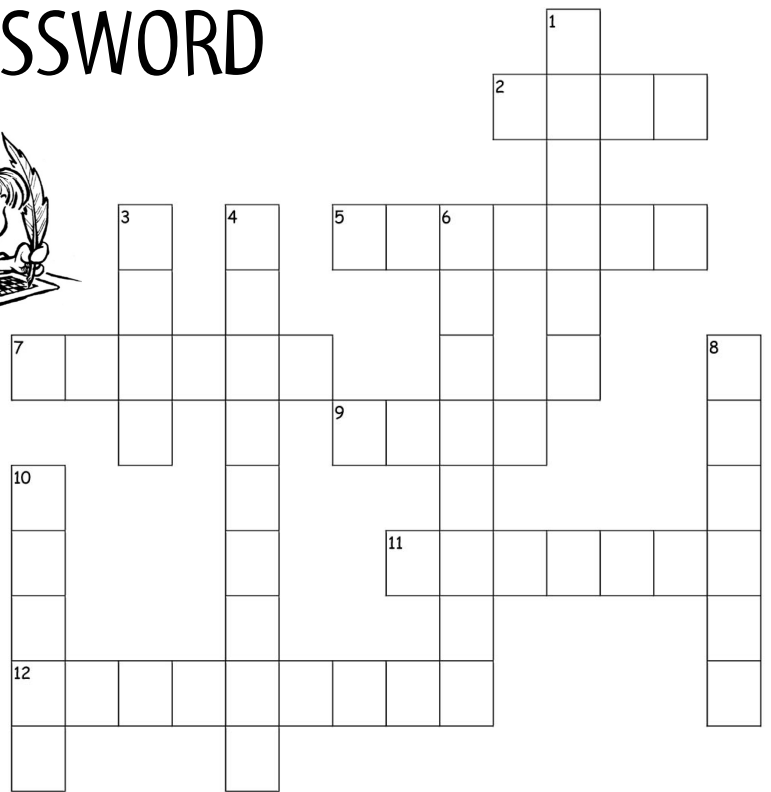
So, we could pause for a moment to pray for those for whom today's Gospel is a challenge beyond our imagining.

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St Peter and St Paul were two great leaders of the early church. Peter was a fisherman whose original name was Simon. Jesus called him and his brother Andrew to be “fishers of men”. St Peter was the leader of the apostles, selected by Jesus to be “the rock” upon which the early church was built. The Gospel according to Mark is believed to be based on Peter’s teachings. St Paul was originally named Saul, a man who persecuted the early Christians. On the road to Damascus, Saul had a vision of Jesus, who told him to become a Christian and preach to the gentiles. St Paul became a tireless missionary whose ideas and thoughts made an enormous impact on the early church. Traditionally, both Peter and Paul were persecuted and executed by the Roman Emperor Nero, and their remains are believed to be buried at the Vatican.

CROSSWORD



Across

- 2: the part of your body that has eyes and ears
- 5: wreck, break apart
- 7: frightened
- 9: to hurt another person
- 11: Jesus says even the hairs on your head are _____
- 12: the roofs of houses (two words)

Down

- 1: something you do not tell anyone
- 3: the absence of light
- 4: to have spoken very quietly
- 6: you are worth more to God than these small birds
- 8: Jesus said “Everything that is _____ will be found out”
- 10: this allows you to see in the darkness

Color in the shapes that contain a dot • and discover the hidden message!

